

§ 1739.16

(8) An environmental report/questionnaire, in accordance with 7 CFR part 1794;

(9) A certification that grant funds will not be used to duplicate lines, facilities, or systems providing Broadband Service;

(10) Federal Obligation Certification on Delinquent Debt; and

(11) Assurance Regarding Felony Conviction or Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants.

§ 1739.16 Review of grant applications.

(a) All applications for grants must be delivered to the Agency at the address and by the date specified in the NOFA (see § 1739.2) to be eligible for funding. The Agency will review each application for conformance with the provisions of this part, and may contact the applicant for clarification of information in the application.

(b) Incomplete applications as of the deadline for submission will not be considered. If an application is determined to be incomplete, the applicant will be notified in writing and the application will be returned with no further action.

(c) If the Agency determines that the Project is technically or financially infeasible or unsustainable, the Agency will notify the applicant, in writing, and the application will be returned with no further action.

(d) Applications conforming with this part will be evaluated competitively by the Agency and will be ranked in accordance with § 1739.17. Applications will then be awarded generally in rank order until all grant funds are expended, subject to paragraphs (e) and (f) of this section.

(e) In addition to scoring, the Agency may take geographic distribution into consideration when making final award determinations.

(f) An award may be made out of rank order if a higher ranked application would require an award that exceeded available funding or would consume a disproportionate amount of funds available relative to its ranking.

(g) The Agency reserves the right to offer an applicant a lower amount than proposed in the application.

7 CFR Ch. XVII (1–1–14 Edition)

§ 1739.17 Scoring of applications.

The ranking of the “community-oriented connectivity” benefits of the Project will be based on documentation in support of the need for services, benefits derived from the proposed services, characteristics of the PFSA, local community involvement in planning and implementation of the Project, and the level of experience of the management team. In ranking applications the Agency will consider the following criteria based on a scale of 100 possible points:

(a) An analysis of the challenges of the following criteria, laid out on a community-wide basis, and how the Project proposes to address these issues (up to 50 points):

- (1) The economic characteristics;
- (2) Educational challenges;
- (3) Health care needs; and
- (4) Public safety issues;

(b) The extent of the Project’s planning, development, and support by local residents, institutions, and Critical Community Facilities. Documentation must include evidence of community-wide involvement, as exemplified by community meetings, public forums, and surveys. In addition, applicants should provide evidence of local residents’ participation in the Project planning and development (up to 40 points).

(c) The level of experience and past success of operating broadband systems for the management team. (up to 10 points)

(d) In making a final selection among and between applications with comparable rankings and geographic distribution, the Administrator may take into consideration the characteristics of the PFSA. Only information provided in the application will be considered. Applicants should therefore specifically address each of the following criteria to differentiate their applications:

- (1) Persistent poverty counties that will be served within the PFSA;
- (2) Out-migration Communities that will be served within the PFSA;
- (3) The rurality of the PFSA;
- (4) The speed of service provided by the project;